

**MINUTES OF A MEETING OF THE PLANNING AND ENVIRONMENT COMMITTEE OF
ABERTILLERY AND LLANHILLETH COMMUNITY COUNCIL (A&LCC)
HELD ON 25 NOVEMBER 2016 at 7pm
in the Council Chamber, Mitre Street, Abertillery**

Present:

Councillors Ivor Beynon, Helen Cunningham, Glyn Smith (in the Chair), John Tiley and Bernard Wall

Richard Gwinnell, Temporary Governance Officer (TGO), A&LCC
2 members of the press and public

Absent:

Councillors William Bard, Roger Clark (apologies received), Ross Edwards, Julie Holt, Julian Meek, Anthony Partridge (apologies received), Norman Price, Jim Roles and Clare Wilkinson

1. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

As shown above.

2. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

No members declared any personal or pecuniary interests.

3. PLANNING APPLICATIONS

Abertillery War Memorial – Planning Update

The Chairman of the Council stated that he had met earlier today with representatives of the Royal British Legion (RBL) and Nick Landers of Blaenau Gwent County Borough Council (BGCBC) to discuss installing a ramp at the War Memorial site entrance, to improve access to the War Memorial for people with disabilities. There were different proposals, for a ramp instead of the existing steps, or for a half-ramp and half-steps arrangement. He understood that CADW would prefer a full ramp at a cost of around £15,000 and that CADW was prepared to fund 80% of the cost.

He sought approval to (a) write to CADW on behalf of the Council, seeking funding and (b) write to BGCBC inviting them to make a presentation of the options to a future Council meeting. He stated in answer to questions and comments that:

- the likelihood of attracting a grant was very high
- this would require full Council approval
- BGCBC had offered to help with the drafting of the planning application and the funding application
- improvements to the War Memorial site were required as soon as possible, especially in light of the 100th anniversary of the end of World War 1 in 2018
- a funding application would need to be submitted quickly
- discussions with the RBL and others could follow later, on the detailed design and other issues, as could discussions on the detailed contract.

The Committee AGREED:

That the Chairman of the Council draft a letter to Nick Landers of BGCBC and submit this as a proposal to the Council for approval on 30 November 2016, with further options, a funding bid and financial implications to be considered in due course.

Proposed Primary School at Six Bells

The Chairman of the Council expressed disappointment that the Council's previous concerns (for example about emergency evacuation of the site) had not been reflected adequately in the latest plans for the new school and that it was not clear whether the emergency services had been consulted.

Other members referred to and queried other sections of the consultation document and discussion ensued on:

- the intention of the applicant (BGCBC) to address emergency vehicle access and other issues at a later stage of the process
- the involvement and views of Bethany Chapel
- the inadequacy of parking provision
- the relative merits of various parts of the site being used for parking
- the Council's previously submitted views not being addressed properly
- whether a BGCBC officer or Cabinet member should be invited to an ALCC Council meeting to discuss the application further
- who could be relied upon to respond; planning or education representatives?
- the traffic bottlenecks that would be created under the current proposals
- a report that the site plans were drawn up with a view to traffic avoiding Bridge Street and a new one way system being operational
- a report that four new sets of traffic lights would be installed
- the significant level of contradictory information and rumours circulating and the lack of sufficient detail in the proposals
- the need for a new school, which members agreed with
- the need to consider other sites for a new school, which may be better
- this being an amenity site
- the history of misinformation about the site and the costs of demolishing the leisure centre
- the need to respond to the application by 14 December 2016
- the need for more assurance on water treatment and slippage issues
- whether other existing school sites should be expanded instead of building a new school on this site
- whether other schools may be closed and merged with the new school
- the fact that the site had been allocated for a school for some time and that BGCBC had attended ALCC meetings to discuss the new school previously
- whether the proposals for a new railway line had been taken into account
- whether there was adequate provision for emergency vehicle access, including the air ambulance, which had landed there before
- that the Council's views expressed previously had been ignored to a large extent.

The Committee AGREED:

That the Chairman of the Council drafts a further letter, reiterating the Council's concerns and inviting a BGCBC representative to attend an ALCC Council meeting, and circulates this to all members of the Planning Committee for agreement prior to the letter being sent.

The meeting ended at 7.45pm.

Signed as a correct record by the Chairman

NB these minutes are a summary of the proceedings and record of the decisions taken. They are not intended to be a verbatim record.

Minutes produced by Richard Gwinnell, Acting Proper Officer and Temporary Governance Officer, ALCC